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Helpful Hints For Searching the Supreme Court Decisions (1937-1975) Online via GPO Access

Content and file format:

The historical file of Supreme Court Decisions from the U.S. Air Force FLITE ("Federal Legal Information Through Electronics") is now available as a *GPO Access* database. This file provides the public free Internet access to the more than 7,000 Supreme Court Opinions dating from 1937 through 1975, volumes 300 through 422 of U.S. Reports. It is provided through the efforts of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget. The database is made available to the public as a finding aid to the "official" version in the United States Reports, therefore, GPO does not guarantee the authenticity or completeness of the data. Each file is available as an ASCII text file.

Fields:

Fields in the Supreme Court Decisions (1937-1975) database online via GPO Access are:

Case: case

Case Number: casenum

When searching via SWAIS (dial-in or telnet session) or a WAIS client, a field can be searched by typing the field name, followed by an equals sign (=), followed by the term or terms that are sought. Similarly, When searching via the World Wide Web, you may type in the field name, followed by an equals sign (=), followed by the search term(s) sought or link to the ADVANCED searching pages which contain established fields. All queries that do not specify a field search the entire database.

Identification Code

Each Supreme Court case in the database will display in the results list with the word "case" followed by the case name. For example: Case:

SMITH V. SMITH

Maximum Responses:

The default settings for SWAIS and for the WinWAIS/MacWAIS client software is to return a maximum of 40 responses to a query. To locate a larger number of documents, (maximum number is 350) you will need to change the setting. In SWAIS type a lower case o at the SOURCE SELECTION menu to change your options. In WinWAIS, select *Edit* and then *Preferences* from the pull-down menu. In MacWAIS, select *File* and then *Preferences* from the pull-down menu.

Sample Searches: ²

Case Name

Query: case= "stanley v. illinois"

Result: Case: STANLEY V. ILLINOIS

When searching for a specific case by name, use the "case" field. This will retrieve only that specific case. If you do not specify the field, the system will also retrieve any decisions in which that case is referenced. The case name must be enclosed in quotation marks.

Case Number

Query: casenum=406US205

Result: Case: WISCONSIN V. YODER

This search will retrieve only the specific case number you enter. Case number citations must be entered with NO spaces or punctuation. You do NOT need to enclose the citation in quotation marks. If you want to search for cases in which a specific case number is referenced you must search the full text of the database (do not use any fields) and enter the citation as: "406 U.S. 205" Be sure to enclose the citation in quotation marks and include spaces and punctuation.

Subject

Query: "gun control"

Result: Case: HUDDLESTON V. UNITED STATES

This search allows you to search the full database by subject terms. Any document containing the term or term(s) you searched for will appear in your results list. No fields should be used when performing a search by subject in this database.

ote: The first document retrie ved after every search (1,000 point document) will be a "Catalog of Available Supreme Court Cases.

Additional *GPO Access* Materials:

GPO Access User's Guide & Helpful Hints - Available via:

Dial-in: 202-512-1387- From the Main Menu type B for *GPO Access*; type 4 *GPO Access* WAIS User Documentation & Helpful Hints; select 2 for Helpful Hints. The guide is available in sections or in its entirety & hints are listed by database name. Files are available in ASCII and PDF formats.

FTP: fedbbs.access.gpo.gov or point your browser to http://fedbbs.access.gpo.gov. The file is in the HELP directory. Check 00INDEX.txt for the file descriptions.

Online via *GPO Access*: The User's Guide is available as a database online via *GPO Access* and can be accessed through the Web, WAIS and SWAIS. Documents are available in ASCII and PDF formats. The Helpful Hints are available online by searching for the word hints in each database.

The Superintendent of Document's World Wide Web Home Page: The User's Guide and Helpful Hints are available at: http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/desc004.html.

GPO Access Training Booklet

Electronic copies of the training booklet are available on the Federal Bulletin Board via:

Dial-in: 202-512-1387- From the Main Menu select B for *GPO Access*; select # 4 *GPO Access* WAIS User Documentation and Helpful Hints; select 1 for User Documentation. The self-executing file names are traintxt.exe for the text version and trainpdf.exe for the Adobe Acrobat PDF version (traintxt.sea or trainpdf.sea for Macintosh).

Web/FTP: fedbbs.access.gpo.gov or point your browser to http://fedbbs.access.gpo.gov The file is in the HELP directory. Check 00INDEX.txt for file descriptions.

ENDNOTES:

- {1} The results of these sample searches are described as they will appear using SWAIS or the WinWAIS and MacWAIS client software customized for use with *GPO Access*. The searches can be performed with other WAIS client software, but the display of the results may vary.
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